QRV?

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The Newsletter of the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

Special Training/Membership Issue

Notes From the ACS General Membership Meeting at the EOC, January 31, 1998

By

Peter Smith N7BYP and Mark Sheppard N7LYE

A general meeting of the Auxiliary Communication Service (ACS) was held at the Seattle Emergency Operations Center (EOC) on Saturday, January 31, 1998, from 9 a.m. until noon. A good number of ACS members turned out for the meeting. For those of you who were unable to attend (and also for those who were present) we're including these summary notes of the proceedings in *QRV?*.

Seattle Communications Networks

Bill Schrier, Director of Telecommunications for the city of Seattle, presented an overview of the city's communications systems and plans. He stressed that communication is essential for governmental activity during "normal" times. In times of disaster it assumes vital importance. Therefore, the city operates and maintains its own communications network system to ensure reliability. The network consists of telephone, data communications, and a new 800 MHz radio system. In an emergency, if public communications are not working , the city's networks (telephone, data, radio) can still be operational.

King County has built an 800 MHz radio network replacing over 100 individual radio systems. The new system is designed to coordinate communications among public safety agencies, schools, and hospitals. This is essential for effective mutual support among these organizations. At the present time there are 9500 radios countywide, mostly analog, some digital and a few secure digital. The county system features redundancy, battery backup, and generators to ensure reliability.

Seattle has established a Citizen Emergency Resource Center to receive reports of events such as mud slides and other emergency events.

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Photo by Pete Smith

Bill Schrier presents Seattle's communication strategy at the ACS meeting

QRV?

QRV? = "Are you prepared?"

QRV? is the Newsletter of the Seattle Auxiliary Communication Service

City of Seattle
Division of Emergency Management

ACS Nets/Simplex Freequncies

Mondays 7:00 p.m.
146.96 MHz
443.00 MHz (tone 141.3 Hz)

Primary/Citywide 146.56
East sector 145.59
West Sector 147.58

ACS Website

http://www.pan.ci.seattle.wa.us/seattle/engr/home.htm

State & County Nets

Washington State Emergency
Mondays at 6:30 p.m.
Saturdays at 9:00 a.m.
3.987 MHz

King County ARES
Sundays at 8:00 p.m.
145.330 MHz

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From the Editor

SuperWonderRadio

Don't get me wrong. I really like my HT. And that's not just my opinion. According to the owner's manual: "The SuperWonderRadio is a deluxe compact FM hand-held for the 2-meter and 70-cm amateur bands, providing the latest capabilities blah, blah, blah.." It certainly has plenty of features. That's why I bought it. I like bells and whistles. The more the better. My HT has so many functions there isn't enough room on the case to put all the necessary buttons to control them. The tiny ones they've managed to squeeze on the case often serve two and even three purposes. It's hard to remember which buttons do what.

And there's the problem. Accidentally entering the wrong button sequence can disable my HT. I know. I've done it. And when it's happened, I've felt pretty stupid. At least the owner's manual offers some consolation (again, from the manual) "Don't worry if you find operation somewhat complicated... ...it is not difficult to get lost."

Usually my mistaken keypad entries aren't that big a deal. Check the manual, consult the "In Case of Problems" section. It offers helpful advice, not the least of which is what to do when all else fails (one final quote): "As a last resort, if you are unable to gain sensible control of the transceiver, reset the CPU as described below." Yeah. Right. Reset the CPU. Every memory channel and programmed feature I've painstakenly entered is lost. Gone. Back to square one. Don't want to do that unless there's really no other choice.

Resetting the CPU is bad enough in normal times. Just imagine how much worse it will be in an emergency. Picture this: Important messages to send, I'm excited and hit the wrong key sequence, HT locks up, can't fix so as a last resort, reset the CPU. Much later, after repro-

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From the EOC

By Jim Mullen, Director
Seattle Emergency Management

One of the most elusive professional endeavors is acquiring training for the job at hand. In city government, training resources are often the first to be cut when dollars are limited. Professional staff are often torn between their ongoing workloads and their need to keep abreast of developing information and to remain current with professional standards.

While striking the appropriate balance between tending to daily business and acquiring the necessary training (to help you attend to that business) is difficult, those of us who are employed in emergency management know that we must seek as much training in critical areas as possible. One of the most important things we have been able to do as a staff is to continue to support training on a variety of levels within Emergency Management, and we have continued to provide financial resources as well as staff time to assist those who are working with us.

A more significant challenge is to provide for the training of the volunteer. For one thing, the volunteer usually has a

One of the most important things we have been able to do as a staff is to continue to support training

job with its own stresses and requirements. Family considerations are another: there is a very real concern on our part about asking too much from people, and yet the opportunities we will sponsor for amateur radio folks we believe are essen-

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Best of The Rest

This month the "Best of the Rest" comes from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's independent study program. Several distance learning courses are available online. You can participate by downloading course materials, completing requirements, then taking an examination. Here is a listing of the courses now available:

IS-1 Emergency Program Manager: An Orientation to the Position

IS-2 Emergency Preparedness, USA

IS-3 Radiological Emergency Management

IS-5 Hazardous Materials: A Citizen's Orientation

IS-7 A Citizen's Guide to Disaster Assistance

IS-195 Basic Incident Command System

To give you an idea of what a course contains, I've copied the the description of IS-2 Emergency Preparedness, USA taken directly from the FEMA website:

"This independent study course contains information about natural and technological hazards. Participants are led through the development of personal emergency preparedness plans and are encouraged to become involved in the local emergency preparedness network. The text is accompanied by illustrations, maps, charts, and diagrams."

Interested in finding our more about these courses? Point your browser at http://www.fema.gov/home/EMI/crslist.htm

Editor's Note: This issue's "Mark's Message is included in the lead article: *Notes From the ACS General Membership Meeting at the EOC, January 31, 1998*

Where We're Going

By Peter Smith N7BYP

Okay, I'll admit it. I'm biased. I believe the most important thing we can do before the BIG ONE is engage in training. And more training. Then practice. And don't forget drills. I think you get the picture. Although we've made a good start, we still have a long way before we have a truly effective training program. I certainly don't want to give the impression that we haven't done any important training to date. We have. Every Monday evening when we've come up on the ACS net, or every Sunday evening when we join the county emergency net we engage in training. Every time we read an article in a ham magazine or from the Web on disaster communication we participate in training. There are often training activities when we meet at the EOC. We've also received the benefit of some great training classes that other local emergency communication groups have conducted. And although I mention it last, by no means least are the fine training drills we've gone through ourselves.

I'm sure we'd all agree that the training we've had so far has been helpful. Useful. Potentially invaluable. I guess that's what ultimately makes me believe so strongly in the necessity of training. We've had a taste of what it can accomplish. Now let's try to do the job right by establishing a comprehensive, long term program that will build the Seattle ACS into an organization that operates professionally, effectively, in support of the government agencies that will need our help in dealing with the consequences of major and minor disasters that surely will happen.

How can we plan and build a comprehensive training program? Like anything else, we must begin with a plan. Notice especially the use of the the term "we." That's you. You are an extremely important part of the planning process. You can help determine what should be included in training, how training should be presented, and when training should be scheduled. Mark Sheppard N7LYE, Steve Marten of the city's office of emergency preparedness, and I have formed a steering committee to plan comprehensive training. Are *you* be interested in joining our group? If so, please let us know. We can always use help. Otherwise you can still give important assistance by taking a look at how we'll set up training in the plan that follows. Let us know what you think of it. What suggestions you have for additions, deletions, modifications.

Developing a Comprehensive Training Plan

One of the first things we'll need to do is to identify, then describe the roles played by ACS volunteers. Those volunteers, of course, are you. Here are some examples we've named: area aec's, field operators, EOC net control. If you've been to the last couple of meetings at the EOC you've heard us describe these positions. What do you think of them? Do you know of material from similar organizations may be helpful to us? If so, be sure to let us know.

> Your help may mean the difference between the success and failure of the program.

Once we've identified the roles we can set about describing requirements and competencies for those roles. These may then be placed into essential and desirable categories. Soon we will ask you to help us identify those requirements and competencies through a needs assessment survey. This will help ensure that we have identified all of the them.

After requirements and competencies have been listed, we'll develop goals or general statements of training purposes. For each of the goals we'll write specific

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ACS Member Directory

Here is a kind of semi do-it-yourself memberhip directory. Why "do it yourself?" To respect everyone's privacy, we've listed only name and call. To complete the directory, do-it-yourself: Look up or ask for the email and phone number(s) for those with whom you're in frequent contact.

Vernon N. Ashby
KA7QLJ

Jeanette Z. Ashby
KA7QLK

Steven D. Baer
KC7FLP

Kernan Bagley Jr.
KC7GPI

Robert A. Bell
KB7ECK

Martin W. Berg
WA7HVB

Curt W. Black
WR5J

Dean Black
N7USE

Wade J. Blake
N7LGK

Jean D. Brayton
AB7AT

Jim K. Cole
KC7LTB

David W. Cook
N7VWI

Thomas A. Croteau
WA9ZSK

Patricia Croteau
KC7EOE

John N. Cummings
KB7LYD

P. Scott Cummins
KC7LGE

Alton R. Cuplin
N7LGL

Curt Black

William C. Ehler
K7NZV

David E. Gorsich
KB7ZQS

Herman S. Groninger
KC7MIS

Charles L. Hicks
KC7EOC

Jim L. Hicks
K7BDL

David J. Holdsworth
KJ7PW

Mitchell I. Hymowitz
N7JCN

Lesley L. Jacobs
KC7KBM

Ralph W. Javins
N7KGA

David L. Johnson
W7HV

Harris Johnson
N7SOQ

David Kassens
WB7PCF

Gerald Kleinbrook
N7EZU

Vera Kleinbrook
N7XOK

Jim Klinga
WA7CRQ

Richard A. LaJambe
KC7KIW

Roger Loken
W7HPQ

Tom McIntyre
KB7KIF

John Middlekauff
K7JBZ

Bruce W. Miller
KC7IAY

Steve E. Monsey
N0FPF

Liberato Napat
KB7WCE

Kenneth Nordsletter
W7HFW

Mike W. Perry
KE7NV

Bruce T. Portzer
N7ECJ

Kenneth D. Prince
WB0RAZ

Stephan K. Pruss
KB7WKK

Tom C. Ramus
WB7OUT

Cathy M. Ross
N7VCH

Tom Saunders
N7OEP

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Claude Smith
K7WJE

Clarke E. Stockwell
WA7BVQ

Ray Stommel
N7QAK

Russell Sunbury
N7PAU

Benjamin F. Swisher
KN7A

Ted Z. Szatrowski
WA7YXG

John Vanderbeck
KM7O

Paula Weir
KC7FAB

Silas T.Wild
N7SPC

Stan Yarema
K7SY

Ken Yu
N7JLG

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SDART - ACS

Rebecca Juul, Mark Sheppard, and Steve Marten conducted a panel discussion on Seattle Disaster and Response Teams (SDART) and ACS responsibilities, and how the two organizations will work together during times of emergencies.

First, Ms. Juul reviewed the structure and mission of SDART. In the event of a major emergency, neighborhood teams with specific responsibilities will go into action. At the present time, there are over 166 organized neighborhoods, with 3,000 teams in existence. These teams (including communications, damage assessment, first aid, safety & security, light search & rescue, and sheltering & special needs) will become operational in the various city neighborhoods. Communications teams will gather information that will then be taken to ACS operators at community centers. This information will be recorded on specially designed forms, collated, sorted by priority, and relayed through appropriate emergency VHF/UHF radio links to the EOC.

Ms Juul completed her presentation by inviting ACS members to participate in "Disaster Saturday," scheduled to be held April 4. This exercise will provide an excellent opportunity for ACS members to find out more about the SDART program. This event will be held in the Sand Point area. ACS members will be involved in this exercise.

Mark Sheppard reviewed the basic tasks for ACS members in emergencies. One begins by first being sure that the family is safe. Next listen on the ACS emergency frequencies. Instructions will be given. ACS members assigned to community centers should go there and set up operations. Remember that you may need to be totally portable and self-sufficient. Get your station set up, establish connection with the EOC or an area command center. Remember the situation will probably be chaotic and we, as essential ACS communicators, must maintain a sense of order transmitting only essential information. Be sure to get good locations, addresses and/or cross streets. Keep each message to one incident and send only one at a time.

Emergency Communication System Design

Steve Marten, the Operations and Training Coordinator for Seattle's Emergency Management Division, presented an overview of the emergency communication system design. The EOC is involved in strategic (vs tactical) decision making. To make effective decisions, it must establish from a citywide perspective where the most critical incidents occur. Then, intelligent choices in resource deployment can be made. Good decisions from the EOC depend on the quality of information received by the EOC. This is why communications are so important, and why an effective ACS organization is essential.

Good decisions from the EOC depend on the quality of information received by the EOC.

SDART teams are at the core, they collect basic information which is sent to the more than twenty community centers across the city. These become communications nodes. Seattle is divided into four precincts north, south, east, and west. Community centers report to the precincts located in their geographic area. ACS operators at the precincts relay information to the Seattle Police Operating Center which determines relative needs and resource allocations for each of the precincts. Other major city departments also have operating centers which, in turn, report to the EOC. Ideally, information is processed at each stage on its way to the

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tial for continued development of our system.

I am asking each of you to help us, not just by taking the training, but also by communicating when we are asking too much, all at once. ACS has distinguished itself by its unselfishness and its willingness to go the extra mile: in a city known for its voluntarism ACS stands pretty tall. Our agenda, and I know we demand a lot from ourselves, is to get as much done in advance of the BIG ONE as we can. I do lie awake on occasion thinking about all that we have done, and all that we still must do to become more prepared. When we promote, provide, offer, training opportunities please take advantage of them if at all possible.

Believe me, we know how privileged we are to have you on our team. Having said that, please don't let us burn you out. Work with Mark Sheppard to strike the proper balance, and thanks for all that you have done.

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gramming the HT, I'm back on the air. This is definitely not what I want to have happen to those who are depending on me for possible life and death communications. That's where training comes to the rescue.

While I have a pretty good idea of which of my HT features I'll probably need in an emergency, I'm not convinced I've identified them all. I could use some training to help me identify the all essential HT operations I should know. Let's say there are ten of them. Fine. Once I know them, I can practice until they become automatic. When the time comes for me to take up my ACS station, I'll operate my equipment competently, efficiently. That's what it's all about, providing effective, reliable, professional communications to support disaster relief. And that's why training and practice is so vitally important.

Personal Profile: Bill Ehler K7NZV

That new voice of ACS net control that you've been hearing from time to time the last few weeks belongs to Bill Ehler K7NZV. I recently had the pleasure of visiting Bill in his shack during one of our Monday evening nets. And I can tell you that if like me, you get excited about boatanchors (old tube equipment), you'd love Bill's ham shack. His primary HF equipment consists of a National GSB 100 transmitter (behind Bill in the picture) and a National NC 300 receiver (that's the one he's adjusting). Notice also the fine old RCA microphone in the photo. In addition to the Nationals just mentioned, Bill has an old Navy RA0-7 general coverage receiver (National NC100 consumer equivalent) circa 1945. His VHF mainstay is a good old reliable Icom 2AT HT. The antenna farm includes a 40 meter doublet, an eleven element 2 meter beam, a 75 meter vertical, and a 4 band trap vertical. I thought one of the best features of BIll's shack is that his station equipment and service bench occupy opposite walls. Broken radio? No problem. Just pull it, turn around, set it on the service bench, and have at it. Pretty handy!

Before he retired, Bill worked for years as a television service technician for the RCA service company, starting in Cleveland and then moving to Seattle in the fifties. He worked on multiple antennas and closed circuit television distribution systems in commercial establishments such as hotels and hospitals. Eventually, Bill became the senior technician for RCA and was responsible for overseeing and troubleshooting the more difficult installations. Although Bill is retired, he remains very busy. He showed me his "to do" list for the week and it was filled with jobs and appointments. Bill keeps busy helping friends and neighbors and is active in supporting the mission work of his church. As an example, he worked an entire summer overhauling high voltage dc systems in a former troopship that was being refurbished and converted for work in the mission field.

Photo by Pete Smith

Bill Ehler K7NZV

Bill got his start in radio early in life as a cub scout when he built his first crystal receiver at the age of eight. His radio interests grew and he was all set to take his ham license examination when the second world war broke out. After a hitch in the service, he returned to civilian life, a young and growing family, and a the start of a long and productive career in electronics. He maintained an interest in radio through these years, mainly as a short wave listener.

In the late fifties, a ham friend became his elmer and Bill finally received his novice ticket. As the years went by, he upgraded to technician, then finally to a general class license, the one Bill holds today. As for favorite modes and bands, Bill enjoys working ssb on 20 meters and occasionally 40 meters. He also likes VHF FM and hits the repeaters between Seattle and Lynden on his trips northward. Bill suggested a neat idea I'm going to try during my frequent drives down to the Portland area. He keeps a handy list of repeater frequencies on the visor of his car for ready reference as he drives along. I' m going to try that, too!

Bill enjoys working ssb on 20 meters and occasionally 40 meters.

I noticed a stack of QST's in the shack. In addition to being a member of ACS, Bill also is a member and supporter of the American Radio Relay League. As many of us did, Bill became aware of the Auxiliary Communications Service through an invitation from the SDART program to attend a meeting at his local community center, in this case Ballard. There he met Mark N7LYE and Tom WA9ZSK and the rest is history. Lately, Bill has been especially helpful in filling in when Tom can't get make the Monday evening ACS net. In addition, he maintains a presence for ACS on the California State Emergency Radio net that meets every Wednesday morning on 40 meters. Bill has become a highly active and valued member of our organization, ready to lend a hand where needed and we appreciate his solid contributions to ACS.

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performance objectives. The objectives will help us to determine what we should include in training, and also help us to evaluate how effective that training has been. We'll arrange goals and objectives in order of importance or need. This is where the "essential" and "desirable" categories of competencies developed earlier should be helpful. Also, at this point, a training schedule can be developed. We should be in a good position to decide which competencies must be covered first, second, third, etc. In addition, we'll be able to see which training materials will have to be developed by us, and which may be available through outside resources.

Now we'll be ready to design and carry out instruction to meet the objectives stated earlier. Instruction may take form of drills, handbooks, classes, simulations, etc. It may include locally produced and other materials. Can you help design, create materials, or teach training sessions? If so, let us know. Your help may mean the difference between the success and failure of the program.

Finally, a critically important part of our comprehensive program will the development of valid assessment tools and processes to help us be sure that specific training and overall program has been effective. We'll probably want to build in periodic review of roles, requirements, and competencies to be sure we keep the overall training program current. We may also want to build in "certification" requirements for various ACS roles. That will ensure that our members will receive necessary training, and will have the required equipment ready for use in an emergency.

This is a somewhat ambitious undertaking but in the long run we'll really gain tremendous benefits and efficiencies from our training program. You'll play an essential role throughout this process in helping us to identify what training needs exist and how best to meet them. Most importantly, we'll be in a much better position to give solid assurances to Seattle's Emergency Management team that we will be prepared to provide significant service when we're called upon to do so.

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EOC. An effective filtering system is a necessity in times of emergency. Otherwise the EOC will be inundated with too much information. At the EOC, messages are prioritized and put into the emergency management network. Finally, information is given to appropriate departmental representatives at the EOC. The resulting responses are guided by action plans developed by city departments, and by the overall city consolidated action plan.

Skills Assessment

Pete Smith asked members to fill out a form to let us know what equipment, skills and experience they have that may be helpful to our organization.

Packet System

Steve Monsey and Steve Baer described how our basic packet mail system will work. It is currently operating, the central node is on at Key Tower.

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